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General Assembly
Fifty-second Session

Official Records

82nd plenary meeting
Tuesday, 31 March 1998, 4 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Udovenko ..... (Ukraine)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Abu-Nimah (Jordan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 5 p.m.

Agenda item 120 *(continued)*

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/52/785/Add.2)

The Acting President: In a letter contained in document A/52/785/Add.2, the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communications dated 4 February and 23 March 1998, Djibouti and Sierra Leone have made the necessary payments to reduce their arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 8 *(continued)*

Adoption of the agenda of the fifty-second regular session of the General Assembly and organization of work: request for the reopening of the consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 97 (Renewal of the dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership) submitted by the President of the General Assembly

Letter dated 20 March 1998 from the President of the General Assembly addressed to the Chairman of the Second Committee (A/52/836)

The Acting President: In a letter dated 20 March 1998 from the President of the Assembly (A/52/836), the President informs Member States that it is his intention to bring to the attention of the General Assembly, at a forthcoming date, a letter from the Chairman of the Second Committee concerning sub-item (a) of agenda item 97, entitled "Renewal of the dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership" (A/52/832), in order that the Assembly may take note of the letter from the Chairman of the Second Committee.

To enable the General Assembly to consider this matter, it will be necessary to reopen consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 97.

May I take it that the General Assembly, on the proposal of the President of the General Assembly, wishes to reopen the consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 97?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Representatives are aware that sub-item (a) of agenda item 97 was allocated to the Second Committee. However, in order for the General Assembly to consider the sub-item and to take note of the letter by the Chairman of the Second Committee, may I

98-85177 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

take it that the General Assembly wishes to consider sub-item (a) of agenda item 97 directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The General Assembly will consider the sub-item just reopened at a future meeting of the Assembly.

Reports of the Fifth Committee

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now consider the reports of the Fifth Committee on agenda items 17 (e), 17 (g), 113 to 116, 118, 119, 123 and 159, 125, 136, 141, 142 (a), 143 and 153. I request the Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee to introduce the reports of the Fifth Committee in one intervention.

Mr. Moktefi (Algeria), Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee (*interpretation from Arabic*): I have the honour today to present the reports of the Fifth Committee on the deliberations of its first resumed fifty-second session. The Fifth Committee held its first resumed fifty-second session for a period of three weeks, from 9 to 27 March 1998. The Committee held 12 plenary meetings, and negotiations were carried out through numerous informal consultations.

The following is a brief report on the result of the work of the Fifth Committee at this first resumed fifty-second session.

Regarding agenda item 17, entitled "Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments", in particular sub-item (e), "Appointment of members of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/52/674/Add.1. In paragraph 4 of that report, the Fifth Committee, by acclamation, recommends to the General Assembly the nomination of Mr. Kevin Haugh of Ireland as a member of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal for a term of office beginning on the date approved by the General Assembly ending on 31 December 1998.

With regard to sub-item 17 (g), "Appointment of members and alternate members of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/52/676/Add.1. In paragraph 6 of that report, the Committee recommended, by acclamation, to the General Assembly the appointment of Mr. Nester Odaga-Jalomayo of Uganda as a member of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee for a term of office beginning on the date approved by the General Assembly and ending on 31 December 2000.

Concerning agenda item 113, entitled "Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/52/732/Add.1. In paragraph 6 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, that was adopted by the Committee without a vote as draft resolution A/C.5/52/L.28.

Regarding agenda item 114, entitled "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/52/746/Add.1. Under this item, the Committee took action on two questions: the proposed United Nations Code of Conduct, which was also considered under items 153, "Human resources management" and 157, "United Nations reform: measures and proposals", and the question of procurement reform. In connection with the proposed United Nations Code of Conduct, the Committee decided to consider that question at a later date during its resumed fifty-second session, following the comments and observations of the International Civil Service Commission. On the question of procurement reform and outsourcing, in paragraph 9 of its report the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution adopted by the Committee as draft resolution A/C.5/52/L.31. Both the oral draft decision and the draft resolution were adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to agenda item 115, entitled "Programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/52/743/Add.1. In paragraph 4, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft decision that was adopted by the Committee without a vote as draft decision A/C.5/52/L.33.

Concerning agenda item 116, entitled "Programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/52/744/Add.2. In paragraph 15 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution regarding the Integrated Management Information System project, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote as draft resolution A/C.5/52/L.32. In paragraph 16 of the same report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of four draft decisions: "Interim

study of the question of honoraria payable to members of organs and subsidiary organs of the United Nations"; "Reduction and refocusing of non-programme costs", adopted by the Committee as draft decision A/C.5/52/L.24; "Office accommodation at the Palais Wilson", adopted by the Committee as draft decision A/C.5/52/L.23/Rev.1; and "United Nations International Partnership Trust Fund". The draft resolution and the four draft decisions were adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Regarding agenda item 118, entitled "Joint Inspection Unit", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/52/842. In paragraph 6 of that report, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly defer consideration of this agenda item to the second part of its fifty-second session. This oral draft decision was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning agenda item 119, entitled "Pattern of conferences", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/52/734/Add.1. In paragraph 20 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of four draft decisions. The Committee adopted draft decision A/C.5/52/L.26, entitled "Implementation of General Assembly resolution 52/214 A, paragraphs 5 and 6" by a vote of 54 to 25 with 2 abstentions. The other draft decisions, "Upgrading of conference rooms and interpretation booths", "Documentation related to the Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names" and "Implementation of General Assembly resolution 52/214 B, paragraphs 24 and 25", were adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Regarding agenda items 123 and 159, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission" and "Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola" respectively, the report of the Committee is contained in document A/52/547/Add.1. In paragraph 6 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution that was adopted by the Committee without a vote as draft resolution A/C.5/52/L.29.

With regard to agenda item 125, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/52/843. In paragraph 6 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution that was adopted by the Committee without a vote as draft resolution A/C.5/52/L.30.

Concerning agenda item 136, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/52/844. In paragraph 6 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution that was adopted by the Committee without a vote as draft resolution A/C.5/52/L.25.

With regard to agenda item 141, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Support Mission in Haiti", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/52/845. In paragraph 5 of that report, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly take note of the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions contained in document A/52/818. This oral draft decision was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning agenda item 142 (a), entitled "Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations: Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/52/453/Add.2. In paragraph 9 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution that was adopted by the Committee without a vote as draft resolution A/C.5/52/L.27.

With regard to agenda item 143, entitled "Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/52/846. In paragraph 5 of that report, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly defer consideration of this item to the second part of its resumed fifty-second session. This oral draft decision was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Finally, concerning agenda item 153, entitled "Human resources management", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/52/739/Add.1. In paragraph 6 of that report, the Fifth Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of two draft decisions, one on the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the audit of the use of consultants and the other on the respect for the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and related organizations. Both draft decisions were adopted by the Committee without a vote.

The Acting President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Fifth Committee that are before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote. The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that, under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee, unless the Secretariat is notified otherwise in advance.

Agenda item 17 *(continued)*

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(e) Appointment of members of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part II) (A/52/674/Rev.1/Add.1)

The Acting President: In paragraph 4 of the report contained in document A/52/674/Rev.1/Add.1, the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly appoint the following person as a member of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal for a term of office beginning on 31 March 1998 and ending on 31 December 1998: Mr. Kevin Haugh.

May I consider that the Assembly appoints this person?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (e) of agenda item 17?

It was so decided.

(g) Appointment of members and alternate members of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part II) (A/52/676/Add.1)

The Acting President: In paragraph 6 of the report contained in document A/52/676/Add.1, the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly appoint the following person as a member of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee for a term of office beginning on 31 March 1998 and ending on 31 December 2000: Mr. Nester Odaga-Jalomayo.

May I take it that the General Assembly appoints this person?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The Fifth Committee also decided to postpone to a later meeting the remaining appointment from the Group of Asian States.

We have concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (g) of agenda item 17.

Agenda item 113 *(continued)*

Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part II) (A/52/732/Add.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of part II of its report (A/52/732/Add.1).

The draft resolution was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 52/212 B).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 113.

Agenda item 114 (*continued*)

Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part II) (A/52/746/Add.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 9 of Part II of its report (A/52/746/Add.1) and the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 10 of the same report.

We turn first to the draft resolution, entitled "Procurement reform and outsourcing", which was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 52/226 A and B)

The Acting President: We turn now to the draft decision, entitled "Proposed United Nations Code of Conduct", which the Fifth Committee adopted without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom, who will speak on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Thorne (United Kingdom): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union on the issue of procurement reform. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated country Cyprus align themselves with this statement.

We would first like to take this opportunity to thank the coordinator of this item in the Fifth Committee, Mr. Miles Armitage, for his professionalism in bringing together consensus on such an important issue.

The European Union attaches the greatest importance to the issue of procurement reform, which is the subject of the resolution we have just adopted in document A/52/746/Add.1. We made the strength of our views clear during our introductory statement on this issue when the debate was resumed in the Fifth Committee three weeks ago.

That this debate will once again have to be resumed at our next session is a cause of considerable disappointment and, indeed, some disquiet. This is an area where the United Nations is exposed to commercial society. Its performance in recent years has left much to be desired. Repeated calls by the Member States for fundamental reform have led to little or no significant movement. That we achieved consensus on this resolution with relative ease demonstrates our common conviction of that unfortunate situation. Delegations were unanimous on many important issues, not least in their call for the early implementation of revised financial regulations and the long-awaited rules governing procurement procedures. We have asked for these to be submitted in good time for the next resumed session of the Fifth Committee, which will begin on 11 May.

We also ask the Secretary-General to examine and report on three other key areas, which I will enumerate briefly as follows: first, ways in which developing countries and countries with economies in transition might gain a larger share of United Nations procurement; secondly, ways in which those who are fully paid up with their contributions to the United Nations might be given some measure of priority in the conclusion of procurement contracts — we are particularly interested in the experience of the World Bank in this context; and, thirdly, ways in which the structure of the Procurement Division might be better adapted to meet the needs of the Organization.

For the first two of these issues, we have asked for reports to be submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session. The European Union believes that these reports should be made available no later than the autumn of 1998.

On the third point, the issue of the structure and staffing of the Procurement Division, there was some

disagreement between Member States. The European Union has consistently supported the Secretary-General's own view that he requires a highly qualified officer at the level of D-2, with experience of top-level procurement, to run United Nations operations. We continue to believe that such an experienced pair of hands is necessary to deal with these important issues where the United Nations must interact with top international commercial competition.

We were pleased that Mr. Connor, the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, found the time to come and introduce this issue to the Fifth Committee. We were also happy to welcome Mr. Niwa, the responsible Acting Assistant Secretary-General, to some of our informal consultations on these important matters. We trust we can rely on their personal interest in an area which will continue to attract attention.

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 114.

Agenda item 115 (*continued*)

Programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part II) (A/52/743/Add.1)

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 4 of part II of its report (A/52/743/Add.1). The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to do likewise?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 115.

Agenda item 116 (*continued*)

Programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part III) (A/52/744/Add.2)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 15 of part III of its report (A/52/744/Add.2), and on the four draft decisions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 16 of the same report.

The draft resolution is entitled "Integrated Management Information System". The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 52/227).

The Acting President: Draft decision I, entitled "Interim study of the question of honoraria payable to members of organs and subsidiary organs of the United Nations", was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly too wishes to adopt the draft decision?

Draft decision I was adopted.

The Acting President: Draft decision II is entitled "Reduction and refocusing of non-programme costs". It was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes also to adopt the draft decision?

Draft decision II was adopted.

The Acting President: Draft decision III, entitled "Office accommodation at the Palais Wilson", was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft decision III?

Draft decision III was adopted.

The Acting President: Draft decision IV, entitled "United Nations International Partnership Trust Fund", was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes also to adopt the draft decision?

Draft decision IV was adopted.

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 116.

Agenda item 118

Joint Inspection Unit

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/842)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take action on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote; may I consider that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 118.

Agenda item 119 (*continued*)

Pattern of conferences

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part II) (A/52/734/Add.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take action on the four draft decisions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 20 of part II of its report (A/52/734/Add.1).

We turn first to draft decision I, entitled "Implementation of General Assembly resolution 52/214 A, paragraphs 5 and 6".

I call on the representative of Japan on a point of order.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): Through you, Sir, I request clarification from the Secretariat as to the programme budget implications of draft decision I.

The Acting President: I call on the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Jin Yongjian (Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services): I should like to inform members that, should the General Assembly adopt draft decision I, United Nations official holidays would be set at 10 rather than nine days. The Secretary-General would ensure the implementation of this draft decision and make any adjustments required. There would be no programme budget implications arising as a result of its adoption.

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Indonesia on a point of order.

Mr. Atiyanto (Indonesia): We have listened to the statements by the representative of Japan and by the representative of the Secretariat. In that regard, the Group of 77 and China would like to place on record that we are not convinced of the need for the Secretariat to have made a statement on the financial implications of the draft decision on which we are about to take action. Further, we do not see the need to reopen the debate at this moment, since the Fifth Committee, as the competent committee with regard to administrative and budgetary matters, has already taken action on the issue of United Nations official holidays. As the President has recalled, and as all Member States have agreed, we will be applying rule 66 of the rules of the procedure of the General Assembly.

Having said that, my delegation, once again on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, would sincerely appeal to members not to insist on reopening the debate on this issue. Furthermore, we would once again sincerely appeal to all concerned members to understand the position of the Group of 77 and China and to support the draft decision, which has been adopted by the Fifth Committee, so as to enable the General Assembly to take action on it by consensus.

My delegation would therefore like to suggest that we proceed in that manner to take action on draft decision I.

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Qatar on a point of order.

Mr. Al-Khalifa (Qatar): On behalf of the States members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, I wish to say that we support the position just set out by the Chairman of the Group of 77. At the same time, I think it is time for us to get beyond what happened in the Fifth Committee. None of us should reopen this issue; in a kind and friendly way, I urge all members to join consensus on this issue.

The Acting President: I am informed by the Secretariat that there has been no request for a vote on draft decision I. May I therefore take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt the draft decision?

Draft decision I was adopted.

The Acting President: Draft decision II is entitled "Upgrading of conference rooms and interpretation booths". The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: Draft decision III is entitled "Documentation related to the Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names". The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: We turn next to draft decision IV, entitled "Implementation of General Assembly resolution 52/214 B, paragraphs 24 and 25". The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to those speakers who wish to explain their positions on the draft decisions just adopted.

Mr. Bista (Nepal): My delegation joined the consensus in favour of draft decision I, entitled "Implementation of General Assembly resolution 52/214 A, paragraphs 5 and 6", in the belief that it seeks, basically and more than anything else, to promote the universal character of the United Nations.

One of the principal objectives of the Organization is to promote universal respect for the equal rights of peoples, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion — an objective to be reflected also in our official holidays. It is the view of my delegation that in the selection of official holidays not only should a balance be struck between international and local custom and the optimal use of the resources of the Organization, but due regard should also be paid to reflecting the main forms of civilization of the world. The Secretary-General may therefore be well advised to look into the matter more deeply and to report to the General Assembly at an appropriate time so that our reformed Organization does not have to make ad hoc decisions in this regard in future.

Mr. Atiyanto (Indonesia): The Group of 77 and China welcome draft decision I on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 52/214 A, paragraphs 5 and 6, which has just been adopted by the General Assembly by consensus, and which decides that the United Nations official holidays shall be set at 10 days in order to observe the two holidays of Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha at United Nations Headquarters and other United Nations duty stations.

The support given by the Group of 77 and China is indeed a true reflection of genuine solidarity among its members, which despite their multicultural make-up, can agree to stand in unity and work to preserve the international character of the United Nations. The Group of 77 and China believe that the adoption of that decision is of particular significance in that it recognizes the extensive diversity of the Members of the United Nations.

Finally, I should like to express the appreciation of the Group of 77 and China to those who worked in support of the decision and also to request at this time that the Secretary-General work to fully implement the decision in its letter and spirit so that we may avoid further debate on the subject in the future.

Mr. Thorne (United Kingdom): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union on the issue of United Nations holidays and draft decision I, which we have just adopted. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — as well as the European Free-Trade Area countries members of the European Economic Area, Iceland and Liechtenstein, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union very much regretted that in the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly some delegations insisted upon reopening the very carefully balanced resolution 52/214, which we had adopted only three months earlier. Last week the European Union was obliged to vote against a text which changed the carefully balanced agreement therein.

It is always regrettable when the Fifth Committee resorts to voting. In order not to repeat that procedure, the European Union has acquiesced in consensus on this occasion. I would, however, recall that the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, Ms. Salim, informed the Fifth Committee on 26 March

that the Secretary-General continued to believe that he had fully complied with the provisions of resolution 52/214.

This confirmed our own understanding of the position. While it is for the General Assembly to decide upon the number of official holidays to be accorded, it is for the Secretary-General, in consultation with the staff, to decide upon their allocation. To our knowledge, the General Assembly has never in the past instructed the Secretary-General in this way to allocate official holidays in any specific fashion. In our view, it is wrong for it to do so now. We therefore deeply regret the action we have taken, first in the Fifth Committee and now here today, which impinges directly upon the authority of the Secretary-General and contravenes the principles of the United Nations Charter.

The United Nations is, like the European Union itself, an Organization of Member States which spans such a broad range of traditions that, in order to respect all, it must not privilege any. For this reason we attach the greatest importance to the principles of equality enshrined in the Charter. That is why we worked so hard to support those who sought to explore all possible means to avoid this outcome.

Mr. Richardson (United States of America): I take the floor today to address an issue of concern to the United States, but one which we do not believe needed to come to this pass. The issue of what holidays should be officially celebrated at United Nations Headquarters and its duty stations has become one of the most sensitive issues which the General Assembly has considered at this session.

We are deeply concerned that the decision increases the number of officially observed holidays. While we trust the assurances from the Secretariat that increasing the number of holidays will not have financial and budgetary implications, our concerns remain straightforward: we should not send a contradictory signal to the world that, at a time when reform of this Organization should be paramount, we would increase the number of officially recognized holidays in which the staff has additional time off.

The United Nations needs to be made more efficient and cost-effective; increasing the number of officially observed holidays does not work towards the goal of United Nations reform. The perception alone of such a move is contrary to reform.

We are also concerned that the decision undermines the Secretary-General's prerogative as chief administrative officer of the Organization, to establish the holidays observed at the different duty stations, on the basis of the customs and practices of the various host countries. We note that the United Nations currently recognizes over 50 holidays, which are celebrated as appropriate at the various United Nations headquarters and duty stations.

Finally — and this is perhaps the most sensitive aspect — we remain deeply concerned that the current decision to make mandatory the observance of two religious holidays at all United Nations duty stations is not in conformity with the secular nature of the United Nations; nor does it promote equity among the very diverse religions and cultures of the Member States of the Organization, as reflected in the spirit and intent of the Charter.

During discussions in the Fifth Committee, the United States expressed all these concerns and sought to amend the proposed decision in order to find a reasonable compromise. Unfortunately, our efforts did not prevail. Nonetheless, we reluctantly join consensus at this time on the proposed decision.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): Having joined in the adoption of draft decision I, I should like to make a brief statement to explain my delegation's position.

Earlier on, my delegation had to vote against the draft decision (A/C.5/52/L.26) in the Fifth Committee because the matter was prematurely put to the vote before every effort to achieve consensus had been exhausted. That is a well-established tradition in that Committee. Also, the draft decision appears to depart from the understanding of Member States at the time when the General Assembly adopted resolution 52/214 A a few months ago during the current session of the General Assembly.

My delegation believes that official holidays at each Secretariat duty station should be more appropriately designated within the purview of the Secretary-General as chief administrative officer of the Organization rather than instructed by a decision of the General Assembly. Therefore, my delegation welcomes the most recent efforts made, which have led to the plenary taking action today without a vote. We are pleased with the statement made today by Under-Secretary-General Jin on behalf of the Secretariat that through the Secretary-General's

administrative adjustment, the present decision will not entail programme budget implications.

Based on this clarification, my delegation takes that decision to be consistent with the understanding of Member States reached at the time of the adoption of resolution 52/214 A. It is for this reason that my delegation has decided to join the consensus adoption of the present decision in a spirit of cooperation and compromise.

Mr. Al-Khalifa (Qatar): On behalf of the member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), I take this opportunity to extend my thanks to all. To me, the adoption of the draft decision designating Ed Al-Fitr and Ed Al-Adha as United Nations holidays represents a new epoch of equality within this, our United Nations. Our member States are very active in the work of the United Nations. A number of our citizens are civil servants of this Organization, and it is about time that our rights and theirs are recognized. We do not believe that this is a regional Organization, nor do we believe that secularism or financial implications had anything to do with any position taken by any country. We think there is something other than that. But this is all behind us now, and again I extend my thanks to all.

Mr. Hanson (Canada) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation is pleased to associate itself with the consensus that has emerged today on this issue. We are pleased mainly because a vote was avoided and we have returned to the procedure that is most suited to this kind of decision.

(spoke in English)

We regretted that this matter was forced to a vote in the Fifth Committee, and we are glad that it has been avoided today.

My delegation has supported this decision, principally on the basis of its own national practice. To have 10 days of official holidays generally conforms to Canadian practice, and is in fact slightly less generous than Canadian practice. My delegation finds it necessary to recall, however, that the United Nations is not a sectarian Organization. It does not observe the holy days of any religion in any religious sense. Instead, its legislative bodies decide not to meet from time to time, in deference to the needs and religious devotions of Member States and their representatives, and at each duty station the Secretariat does not work on a set number of days which are decided by the Assembly.

My delegation continues to believe that the selection of staff holidays at each duty station must continue to be set by the Secretary-General in consultation with the staff, in accordance with the Charter and the staff rules. The decision which we have adopted today does not diminish the authority of the Secretary-General. We therefore welcome the statement made here today by the representative of the Secretary-General, in whom we continue to have complete confidence.

Mr. Armitage (Australia): My delegation believes strongly in the importance of the principle of consensus decision-making, particularly in relation to financial and administrative issues in the United Nations. We accept that we will not always be fully comfortable with the compromises this approach inevitably requires, but we take the view that our long-term interests and the interests of the Organization are best served by the consensus approach.

We have joined consensus on this occasion in adopting draft decision I, but with reservations as to the way it has been achieved and in particular the fact that it is underpinned by a vote in the Fifth Committee. Voting on such an issue was, in our view, an extremely disappointing development which we hope will remain an exception to usual practice.

My delegation attaches considerable importance to, and will argue strongly for, the right of all Members to observe their religious, cultural or political traditions. However, that was not at issue in the present case. The departure from the use of local practice as the primary criterion for designating official holidays raises concerns, both as a possible precedent and in light of the secular nature of the Organization. In our view, the designation of official holidays in the United Nations is the responsibility of the Secretary-General, in consultation with staff, taking into account local practice at each duty station.

We are concerned also about the implications of this decision for the authority of the Secretary-General as the chief administrative officer and for the integrity of the staff-management relationship. We are pleased with the Secretariat's statement here today.

The Acting President: We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 119.

Agenda items 123 and 159 *(continued)*

Financing of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission

Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part II) (A/52/547/Add.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of part II of its report (A/52/547/Add.1).

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 52/8 B).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda items 123 and 159.

Agenda item 125

Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/843)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report (A/52/843).

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 52/228).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 125.

Agenda item 136

Financing of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/844)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report (A/52/844).

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 52/229).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 136.

Agenda item 141

Financing of the United Nations Support Mission in Haiti

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/845)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 5 of its report (A/52/845).

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 141.

Agenda item 142 *(continued)*

Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

(a) Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part III) (A/52/453/Add.2)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 9 of part III of its report (A/52/453/Add.2) and on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 10 of the same document.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution, entitled "Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations", without a vote.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 52/230).

The Acting President: The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision, entitled "Implementation of General Assembly resolutions 49/249 and 50/224", without a vote.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 142.

Agenda item 143

Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/846)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 5 of its report (A/52/846).

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 143.

Agenda item 153 *(continued)*

Human resources management

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part II) (A/52/739/Add.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the two draft decisions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of part II of its report (A/52/739/Add.1).

The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision I, entitled "Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the audit of the use of consultants", without a vote.

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision II, entitled "Report submitted by the Secretary-General on behalf of and with the approval of the members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination on the respect for the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and related organizations", without a vote.

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 153.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.

United Nations A/52/PV.83

General Assembly
Fifty-second Session

Official Records

83rd plenary meeting
Monday, 27 April 1998, 10.00 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Udovenko ..... (Ukraine)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 120 (continued)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (Article 19 of the Charter) (A/52/785/Add.3)

The President: In a letter contained in document A/52/785/Add.3, the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communications dated 4 February and 23 and 31 March 1998, El Salvador and Haiti have made the necessary payments to reduce their arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 157 (*continued*)

United Nations reform: measures and proposals

Report of the Secretary-General (A/52/822)

Notes by the Secretary-General (A/52/847, A/52/848, A/52/849, A/52/850, A/52/851 and Corr.1, A/52/852)

The President: In connection with this item, the Assembly has before it the following documents: report of the Secretary-General on a revolving credit fund, document A/52/822; note by the Secretary-General on core resources for development, document A/52/847; note by the Secretary-General on the utilization of the Development Account, document A/52/848; note by the Secretary-General on a new concept of trusteeship, document A/52/849; note by the Secretary-General on a Millennium Assembly, the United Nations system (Special Commission) and a Millennium Forum, document A/52/850; note by the Secretary-General on time limits of new initiatives ("sunset" provisions), documents A/52/851 and A/52/851/Corr.1; and note by the Secretary-General on the impact of the implementation of pilot projects on budgetary practices and procedures, document A/52/852.

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome all present once again to the General Assembly Hall. As announced in the *Journal*, today's meeting is devoted to the consideration of further steps towards the realization of a comprehensive programme of reform aimed at making the Organization better equipped for a pragmatic and more effective accomplishment of its mission in today's world and in the next millennium.

The issue of United Nations reform has been at the centre of deliberations in the General Assembly from the very beginning of its current session. Discussions held during the general debate, at the open-ended consultations of the whole, in the Main Committees, and at the informal informals clearly demonstrated that Member States attach great importance to this matter. For many reasons, I can state that the reform process, initiated by

98-85284 (E)

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the Secretary-General back in March 1997, and its outcome during the main part of the fifty-second session highlight the determination of the United Nations and its constituents to review a wide range of issues related to the Organization and its activities.

In this regard, let me briefly recall that two consensus resolutions under agenda item 157, entitled "United Nations reform: measures and proposals", were adopted on 12 November and 19 December last year. I do not wish to comment extensively on the provisions of those resolutions, since I believe that the months of negotiations which led to their adoption allow a lot of the delegates present here today not only to make a precise quotation of the relevant paragraphs, but also to give a full negotiating history of the formulations agreed upon.

In those resolutions, the Secretary-General was requested to submit a number of reports and additional explanations related to the different aspects of realizing the reform proposals. In particular, under resolution 52/12 B some of the reports and explanations were to be submitted before the end of March this year, namely on a new system of core resources, on a revolving credit fund, on the utilization of a development account, on the Millennium Assembly, et cetera.

I wish to extend my gratitude to the Secretary-General and his team for the timely preparation of the requested documents, as well as for his willingness to present them personally in the General Assembly. His dedication and tireless efforts aimed at reforming the Organization deserve our continued appreciation.

The new set of documents, which has already been given the name "Track 3 reform" in the corridors of the United Nations, places a number of questions before the General Assembly on, first of all, how to proceed further with their consideration. I hope that the question of how to deal with the reports and notes presented by the Secretary-General will be one of the focal points of today's discussion, and I would like to encourage views and proposals in this regard.

The fifty-second session has already been marked as the Reform Assembly. Today's meeting is a vivid testament to the remarks which I made at the adoption of the second resolution on United Nations reform, to the effect that that resolution actually represented not a concluding stage but a first step on the road to transformations in the Organization. We are now facing new challenges: to ensure the continuity of the reform process in the General Assembly and to give it a new impetus at the intergovernmental level which will permit us to consider changes of a more fundamental nature.

In this context, I cannot help but mention the current financial situation of the United Nations. Lack of substantial improvements in this area may seriously undermine the credibility of the reform process, thus sending a strong negative message to the outside world and the general public about the ability of the United Nations to adapt itself to the changing international environment.

I hope that there is a clear understanding in this Hall that the contributions to the United Nations should be paid by the Member States in full, on time and without conditions. In this regard I would like to stress that issues of United Nations reform depend not only on the political will of the membership, but also on sufficient funding. For United Nations reform to succeed, all Member States must assume their treaty obligations and ensure full payment of their assessments. United Nations reform is well underway. I take this opportunity to repeat my earnest appeal to all Member States, including in particular the largest contributor, to swiftly pay their outstanding as well as current contributions. It will be the most definite indication of genuine support for the United Nations.

There is no one in the Assembly who could seriously question the need to continue the reform of the United Nations. Indeed, in recent months the reform process has become not only an integral part of the daily life of the Organization but also of ourselves as individuals. By engaging in it, we strive to make the more effective United Nations contribute better to the people in their efforts to build a safer, healthier and more just and prosperous world. The United Nations must continue to undergo changes, but it is my strong belief that only changes which enjoy the universal support of Member States and serve collective needs can be successful. And let me also remind you that the only place where success comes before work is in the dictionary.

I now invite the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, to address the General Assembly.

The Secretary-General: It gives me great pleasure to come before you again to discuss the reform and renewal of the United Nations. Much has happened since we last gathered, in world affairs and in the ways of this

house, that makes me especially eager to push ahead with this process.

Last July, I proposed to you that we begin a quiet revolution to transform the United Nations: its leadership, its structures and its performance. In September, I challenged the General Assembly to become the Reform Assembly — to join forces and seize the opportunity of a new global era to revitalize the Organization.

We are well on our way. Last fall, you initiated the process of open-ended informal consultations within the plenary, an innovation that expedited our deliberations. In your resolutions 52/12 A and B, you endorsed a range of landmark actions and set a course for future progress that promises similarly historic gains. I am very grateful to the members of the Assembly for these important first steps. I am here today to facilitate the conclusion of the first phase of this work.

I would like to review with you the current state of the reform process and where I believe we are headed.

Allow me to begin by reporting that the measures that fall within the prerogative of the Secretary-General have been largely implemented. As you know, the work of the Secretariat in its main thematic areas is now guided by Executive Committees in order to ensure communication, coordination and a common purpose. The Senior Management Group has also proven its worth quickly as the first systematic forum where the leaders of all United Nations departments, programmes and funds come together to develop policies and ensure managerial clarity. The Group meets weekly, with colleagues in Geneva, Nairobi, Rome and Vienna participating by teleconference. Its work will soon benefit from that of the Strategic Planning Unit, our first in-house "think tank", whose terms of reference I have just approved. And our work in two major areas — disarmament and humanitarian assistance — has been given new focus and impetus.

If reform begins at the top, with these and other steps affecting leadership at Headquarters, reform must prove itself on the ground, in bringing positive change into people's daily lives.

The United Nations Development Group has come into being, promising greater coordination and integration of our operational activities for development. We are establishing "UN Houses", common premises to promote teamwork and efficiency, and in a year or two we should have as many as 50 "UN Houses".

And we have made significant progress in devising Development Assistance Frameworks so that United Nations programmes and funds come together not only physically but in their work as well, in support of a common vision and objective that host Governments themselves determine.

Reform has brought reductions in budget and in staff, and the consolidation of some Headquarters departments and activities. But reform is far more than the sum of these or any other cuts. Procedures and rules are being simplified. Administrative costs are being reduced. Common services are being extended, and an electronic United Nations has become a reality. Above all else, a fundamental review of human resources management is under way, with the objective of strengthening the staff of the United Nations.

The net result is as it should be: a more productive and effective Organization, together with a renewed emphasis on economic, social and development activities, the very heart of our mission.

Looking beyond achievements within the Secretariat, I am pleased that the various recommendations I made for reforms in the intergovernmental machinery are under consideration by appropriate bodies. I very much hope that we will soon see progress in this realm as well.

I am also pleased to report that the Secretariat has now issued, in response to the request of the General Assembly, seven notes on a number of the recommendations contained in my reform plan. Allow me to review them briefly.

We are proposing a Millennium Assembly, not merely to commemorate the year 2000 but to articulate a vision for the United Nations in the new century and to propose system-wide institutional adaptations that will enable us to act on that vision. We are also suggesting that a non-governmental forum be held in conjunction with the Millennium Assembly, in recognition of civil society's rightful place in our work — and in recognition of the United Nations own need to move closer to the people it exists to serve.

We are proposing time limits, or "sunset provisions", for initiatives involving new organizational structures or major commitments of funds. Upon the expiration of a duration specified by Member States, mandates would continue only if they were explicitly renewed. This practice would help us end the built-in bias towards

institutional inertia that has afflicted the Organization for far too long.

We have elaborated on our earlier proposal for the development dividend, which will channel savings generated by administrative efficiencies towards investments that benefit developing countries.

We are recommending ways to ensure more predictable and secure core resources for development. This is essential if United Nations funds and programmes are to increase efficiency, avert discontinuities and maintain a relationship of trust and reliability that is a key part of being an effective development partner. It will also lead to better planning and management oversight by the boards. The practical measures we are recommending should be seen as first steps towards more effective funding modalities.

Finally, you will soon receive further elaborations of my proposal that the United Nations shift to results-based budgeting, including departmental mock-ups illustrating how such a system would function. Perhaps more than any other measure, this will give the Organization the flexibility and agility it needs in an era of rapid change, while at the same time enhancing both transparency and the Secretariat's accountability to Member States.

It is my hope that you will adopt some of these proposals quickly in the plenary and permit us to proceed with implementation. Where more extensive technical analysis may be required, I hope that the Assembly will forward those recommendations to the appropriate committees so that they may report back to the plenary in a timely manner that will permit adoption of these recommendations before the end of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly.

The world has just seen, in the recent agreement between the United Nations and Iraq concerning weapons inspections, just how much a united and determined international community can achieve through the United Nations. What we have done in Iraq through reason, diplomacy and political will, we can do all across the United Nations agenda.

The world has also just witnessed, in recent months of financial turmoil in Asia, yet another example of accelerating interdependence among nations, economic as well as political. This makes the presence of an effective United Nations, as a unique tool for concerted action, more imperative than ever. In this connection, I was particularly impressed by the dialogue that was initiated recently at Headquarters between the Bretton Woods institutions and the Economic and Social Council.

And last but not least, the past year has seen the United Nations staff rise to the occasion: embracing change, coming forth with valuable ideas of their own, proving again and again that they are indeed the Organization's most important asset.

So let us take advantage of this moment of promise, when all of these "stars" — the Member States, a supportive global public, a rededicated staff — seem to be in alignment.

And let me reiterate a fundamental point. We are transforming our United Nations not as an end in itself, but as a means to better carry out our mission of peace, development and human rights. We do this not to please any particular constituency, but because we must be able to better meet the needs of the world's people and the Member States.

This process is not a luxury; it is not a gimmick; and it is not an imposition. Reform is our survival, our future.

Now it is my distinct pleasure to introduce to you the first Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Louise Fréchette.

The establishment of the office of Deputy Secretary-General is the most direct and perhaps most consequential product of the reforms to date. Already, Madame Fréchette is immersed in one of her main priorities: directing the implementation and monitoring of the reforms instituted thus far. She will also be responsible for revising and updating our reform agenda as the process evolves. I know you join me in welcoming her to the United Nations and wishing her well in this and the many other challenging tasks she has now assumed.

Let us push ahead. Let us continue realizing the great promise of this Reform Assembly.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his important, comprehensive statement concerning the implementation of the United Nations reform process, as well as for the introduction of Ms. Louise Fréchette, to whom we wish all the best in her very important endeavour and assignments — not only in implementing

the United Nations reforms but also in any other assignment the Secretary-General may give to her.

Before giving the floor to the first speaker, let me briefly share my views on how we will proceed with the consideration of the reports that have just been presented by the Secretary-General. This question is very important if our deliberations are to be successful. It is indispensable to ensure further thorough and detailed consideration of the reform proposals.

While being flexible regarding a particular procedure, on Thursday 23 April I had a meeting with the Chairmen of the regional groups and expressed my preference on how to handle the matter. During today's debate I would like to encourage Member States to dwell not only on substantive issues but also on the way to organize future proceedings. I think this may facilitate our work on the reform proposals and be helpful in our efforts to reach consensus at this juncture.

Sir John Weston (United Kingdom): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated country Cyprus, as well as the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries members of the European Economic Area, Iceland and Liechtenstein, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union welcomes the opportunity to discuss the follow-up to the Secretary-General's report, "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform" [A/51/950], and the subsequent General Assembly resolutions 52/12 A and B. We would like to take the opportunity to reaffirm our strong support for the Secretary-General's initiatives to strengthen the United Nations through reforms aimed at making the Organization more effective and efficient.

The European Union is grateful to the Secretary-General for the seven papers he has presented to the General Assembly in response to resolution 52/12 B. At this stage I shall make some brief initial remarks on each of the papers.

The European Union welcomes the paper on the Millennium Assembly [A/52/850], which we believe outlines a sensible process for the preparation of this important event. We consider that the new millennium should be celebrated in a special and meaningful manner by the United Nations, and that the proposal of the Secretary-General to produce a report for heads of State and Government derived from a series of internal and external events on the future role of the United Nations should help to achieve a focused and forward-looking outcome. Among these events, the follow-up meetings to the Beijing Conference on Women and to the Copenhagen Social Summit will figure prominently. We believe that the General Assembly should endorse the paper forthwith.

The European Union also believes that the Secretary-General's paper on the Development Account [A/52/848] is useful, and we support the main thrust of its contents. We welcome the intention to use funds in the Account for programmes focusing on global, interregional and regional issues, with an emphasis on helping developing countries to implement commitments arising from United Nations conferences. We are pleased that the paper emphasizes that the Development Account should not be used for activities carried out under other programmes, and in this context we note the need to be particularly careful to avoid duplication of the work of the United Nations funds and programmes. However, we would welcome some further clarification on how reporting to Member States on Development Account programmes will be carried out and how programming, monitoring and evaluation will be handled.

The European Union would also appreciate further details of the practical mechanism for agreeing on the redeployment of the funds to the Development Account, assuming, as the paper does, that there would be savings on a regular basis. Subject to these clarifications, we believe that the proposal should be adopted by the General Assembly in plenary meeting during its fifty-second session.

The European Union also very much welcomes the paper dealing with sunset provisions [A/52/851]. We would therefore fully endorse the proposal that any new initiative should be subjected to time limits and that such limits be stipulated in the relevant resolutions and decisions establishing a new mandate. The current paper also highlights the deficiencies in the way in which existing mandates are reviewed. The European Union has on previous occasions noted with some concern that while procedures do exist for determining the continuing validity of legislative decisions, most mandated programmes and activities have not, in practice, been subjected to specific time limits. Moreover, those evaluation studies which have been concluded have not addressed the question of the continuing validity of the

programmes themselves. Corrective action should be taken to address this problem. We believe that the General Assembly should endorse the principle in this paper and should seek the advice of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and other relevant bodies as to how better to achieve its implementation with regard to existing mandates.

With regard to the document entitled "The impact of the implementation of pilot projects on budgetary practices and procedures" [A/52/852], the European Union welcomes the clarification provided by the Secretary-General in this report.

The European Union welcomes the Secretary-General's note on core resources for development [A/52/847]. The European Union provides a substantial proportion of the funding for United Nations development programmes and activities and recognizes the importance of sound and predictable funding. The Secretary-General's note puts forward a number of ideas on how to improve the predictability of core resources. The European Union is ready to engage constructively in further discussion of this important issue. However, as the paper notes, as part of the follow-up to General Assembly resolution 50/227, consideration of various funding options is currently under way in the Executive Boards of the United Nations funds and programmes. The European Union supports the suggestion of the Secretary-General that our further consideration of this report should be handled in such a way as to ensure that the results of the work in the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes are fully reflected in the eventual conclusions on this item. We would like to see progress achieved on this by no later than the end of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly.

The European Union believes that the Secretary-General's note on the reconstitution of the Trusteeship Council [A/52/849] proposes a sensible process for further consideration of this idea by the Task Force on environmental and human settlement issues. We agree that consideration by the General Assembly should be postponed until the Task Force has completed its work.

The European Union is conscious of the difficult situation in which the Secretary-General finds himself as a result of the precarious financial situation and the consequent perpetual cash-flow problems. In this context, the European Union will carefully consider the proposals outlined in the Secretary-General's report on the establishment of a revolving credit fund [A/52/822] capitalized through, *inter alia*, voluntary contributions by Member States. However, our view remains that the fund cannot be seen as a means of allowing, or indeed encouraging, Member States to avoid their financial obligations to the Organization as laid down in the Charter.

The European Union believes that the plenary of the General Assembly is the appropriate forum for discussion and action on all the papers before us, as it was for the Secretary-General's original report last year. All the issues they cover, particularly those related to development, deserve full and timely consideration. We have indicated above the timescale for some of the items. However, we believe a certain urgency attaches to consideration of the papers on the Millennium Assembly and sunset provisions, while at this stage the papers on the Trusteeship Council and core resources could be noted pending the results of other relevant processes. The European Union is prepared to enter into discussion immediately on these points.

Mr. Londoño-Paredes (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should like to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Allow me to express our appreciation to you, Sir, for having convened this important meeting.

I would also like to express our gratitude to the Secretary-General for his efforts and to those members of the Secretariat who contributed to the preparation of the reports on issues of United Nations reform, as requested in resolution 52/12 B. These reports will generate an in-depth discussion of these subjects.

In view of the importance of the issues and in accordance with the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 52/12 B, which invites the Secretary-General to take into account the views of Member States in preparing the report, the developing countries have continued to review the proposals during the first quarter of 1998 and have submitted its updated views and positions to the Secretary-General through the Group of 77 and the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77.

We now need to take a decision on the manner in which to proceed with regard to the discussion of the outstanding reform proposals. The Joint Coordinating Committee of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 agrees with the proposal to allocate the reports on

economic and financial issues to the competent Committees — in this case, the Second and Fifth Committees — which will report back to the plenary on the results of their work once it is appropriately concluded.

With regard to the proposal for the consideration of longer-term changes, given the fact that the plenary setting is not suitable for the in-depth discussion and negotiation of proposals of such importance as these, the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 is of the view that the study of these issues should be entrusted to a working group or groups of the General Assembly. Such a measure would provide the General Assembly with a commonly-used mechanism to carry out an orderly discussion that would save time, while ensuring that delegations have the information they need and the required possibility of open and transparent negotiation. The Joint Coordinating Committee would like to emphasize the need for the proposals contained in the section of resolution 52/12 B on longer-term changes to be discussed within an open-ended format that guarantees transparency by allowing the full participation of each and every delegation.

Allow me to reiterate the willingness of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 to participate actively and constructively in the analysis of the Secretary-General's proposals for reform. That is our intention.

Mr. Shen Guofang (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): Late last year, the General Assembly, by its relevant resolutions, invited the Secretary-General to further clarify issues addressed in his report, entitled "Renewing the United Nations: A programme for reform", in order to facilitate a better review by the Member States of the relevant recommendations.

The Chinese delegation has read with great interest the seven reports and notes prepared by the Secretary-General on such questions as the Millennium Assembly. We would like to extend our special thanks to Secretary-General Annan for his oral introduction of the reports today before the plenary. We would like to express our deep appreciation for his consistent efforts to push forward the reform of the United Nations since he assumed office last year.

Since the report was received only a couple of days ago, today I would like, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, to share a few preliminary observations.

The Chinese delegation has stated on many previous occasions that the Secretary-General's recommendations in his report on reform involve questions that should be discussed and decided upon by Member States and thus warrant in-depth and thorough study. Now that the Secretary-General has once again laid out his views for the reference of Member States on such questions as the Millennium Assembly, it is incumbent on Member States to make a timely study of these questions through the proper mechanisms. We believe that questions in the economic and financial fields should be referred respectively to the Second and Fifth Committees of the General Assembly. As for the remaining questions, since they cover a wide range of issues, an open-ended working group of the General Assembly could be set up to ensure in-depth and thorough discussion and concrete results.

The Chinese delegation is in favour of the Secretary-General's proposal to convene a Millennium Summit in the year 2000. We believe that, at the dawn of the new century, the United Nations should have an opportunity to look back at its 55 years of existence and to define its future tasks and direction of development so that it will be able to meet the challenges of the next century with greater vitality. To ensure the success of the Summit and the achievement of concrete results, the General Assembly should establish as soon as possible an open-ended preparatory committee to discuss and determine the various arrangements as well as the agenda and documents for the summit. We hope that the Secretary-General will produce a report as soon as possible after listening to the views of the great majority of Member States.

Regarding a new concept of trusteeship, we look forward to the further proposals by the Task Force. However, it should be emphasized that changing the functions of the Trusteeship Council, which would involve a number of political and legal issues, will require a thorough review by all Member States at the appropriate time.

The serious financial crisis that has engulfed the United Nations in recent years must be addressed with greater urgency in the reform process. As everyone knows, the crisis has resulted solely from the arrears which major contributors have refused to settle. Therefore, the only fundamental way to ease the crisis is for the major contributors to pay their overdue contributions as soon as possible and without condition. The establishment of a revolving credit fund might help to ease the crisis temporarily, but we fear that, instead of

solving the crisis once and for all, the fund would only impose an additional financial burden on those Member States that pay their contributions on time. Proposals to revise the current Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations also deserve an in-depth study by the relevant committee.

To promote development is one of the important tasks of the United Nations. We welcome the establishment of a Development Account by the Secretary-General in the current biennial budget, which is to be used specifically for the development of developing countries. We hope that the Account will genuinely play its expected role of further strengthening the work of the United Nations in the field of development, and at the same time without prejudicing or hindering the implementation by the Secretariat of other undertakings under General Assembly mandate. United Nations operational activities, with their universal, neutral and multilateral nature, have played an important and irreplaceable role in international cooperation on development. However, in the past few years, the lack of funds, especially core resources, has set back and undermined operational activities throughout the United Nations system. We are of the view that core resources should continue to come mainly from the contributions of developed countries, especially those which have the capacity to undertake such responsibilities but have shunned them. What is vitally needed here is political will. If countries can reach common ground on this issue, then the core resources for development will enjoy predictable, sustained and guaranteed growth.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Ms. Fréchette upon her formal assumption of office as Deputy Secretary-General. Ms. Fréchette, an outstanding woman with rich experience, is now the first Deputy Secretary-General of the Organization. We are confident that she will greatly assist the Secretary-General in the next few years to make the United Nations work even more efficiently.

Mr. Richardson (United States of America): Thank you, Mr. President, for your thoughtful statement and your continuing leadership of the General Assembly. We wish also to thank the Secretary-General for his reform initiatives and his energy, and for summarizing the main features of what already has been accomplished. We heed the Secretary-General's call for continued work towards the remaining Track-2 United Nations reform recommendations, and pledge our cooperation to him and to other Member States alike on behalf of a more effective and more efficient Organization.

Last autumn's consensus on the Secretary-General's ideas, contained in "Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform", also known as Track 2, was a critical and useful first step in turning ideas into action. Now, as we study more ideas and consider more action, the Secretary-General's famous maxim comes to mind: that reform is a process, and not a single event.

Since the Assembly last addressed this agenda item, much useful work has ensued, and consultations have revealed support and enthusiasm for early results and ongoing implementation. The press has taken note of what many term the most historic reform exercise in United Nations history. As many would attest, the creation of the post of Deputy Secretary-General has been executed with skill and grace, and the Organization is enriched by the appointment of Ms. Louise Fréchette. My delegation is confident of her ability to serve the Secretary-General well on behalf of reform. As we continue, my delegation looks forward to Secretariat reporting on its Track-2 implementation plan, its goals, its action offices, and its timetables.

The reform momentum is evident beyond Headquarters as well. Current sessions of the United Nations regional commissions display steadfastness in improving their activities and performance, and we note increased budget-mindedness and utility in other entities of the United Nations system. Also, the Assembly will soon consider the Secretary-General's report on his implementation of Secretariat and Assembly reforms agreed last year by the General Assembly's Open-Ended High-Level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System.

In the United States delegation's view, our task today is to continue the momentum for the Secretary-General's reform package.

The setting of the General Assembly has served this purpose well in affording consistently high-level participation, keeping negotiations from degenerating into overly detailed stalemates, and sustaining the political momentum necessary for continued cooperation among reform's many participants. Last autumn, informal negotiations of the whole made possible the participation of all interested colleagues and spokesmen, and two major consensus texts emerged within a month of each other. Your formula of Friends of the President, Sir, met with success, and we believe it could continue to serve us well now as we consider the remaining reform recommendations in front of us.

What is it that we hope to see accomplished in this next round of meetings? We must address the Secretary-General's views as elaborated in recent reports, and promote adoption of ideas which would enhance the United Nations. If I may, I would like to outline my delegation's specific views in this regard.

With regard, first, to a Development Account funded from administrative savings, the United States delegation has advocated this from the beginning. We want savings to go to new development programmes, but post-2002 support for those programmes, if merited, should come from additional savings or voluntary contributions, and should not automatically expect regular-budget sourcing.

On trusteeship, the United States feels strongly that the United Nations has accomplished its trusteeship objectives and that there is sufficient United Nations machinery to address environmental concerns, and it therefore opposes refitting the Trusteeship Council to such ends.

With respect to programme sunsetting, we strongly support the Secretary-General's view that any new intergovernmental mandates would be subject to sunset provisions unless otherwise determined, and we would like to see existing programmes so reviewed as well. This is consistent with establishing priorities and an effective managerial culture throughout the Organization.

Turning to a revolving credit fund for regular budget, this idea we believe is not practicable, principally because no one has stated that they would contribute. We would regret it if this issue were to distract Member States from an otherwise productive Track-2 negotiation.

On core resources for development, we appreciate the need to continuing calling for voluntary contributions, and the United States continues to lead in this regard. We believe that effective results in United Nations operations best attract voluntary funding, and that civil society could prove a vital new resource; but again, United States Government budgeting does not permit multi-year pledging.

On millennium plans, we welcome United Nations activity leveraging the symbolic value of the millennium, in part to sustain the reform momentum. The Millennium Assembly appears to be a cost-effective approach within existing resources. Preliminary ideas for a special commission on the United Nations system need more review.

The Secretary-General's delegation of financial and human resources authority to line managers is within his prerogative. We support such front-line accountability and trust that this will discourage micro-management by Member States.

We look forward to subsequent consideration of the Secretary-General's recommendations for results-based budgeting among other items slated for later Assembly consideration.

Again, Mr. President, we appreciate your leadership in promoting yet another useful consensus outcome on United Nations reform recommendations, and we pledge our cooperation with you and all other colleagues for open and candid consultations as we move onward in the process of reform.

Mr. Pal (India): My delegation fully supports the statement just made on behalf of the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77. We thank the Secretary-General for briefing the General Assembly on the implementation of the reforms which the Assembly has approved thus far and for introducing his report and notes today, and we congratulate him on his continuing efforts to reform the United Nations to equip it better to meet current challenges and to make a felt impact on the lives of the citizens of the States represented here.

We welcome the Deputy Secretary-General, whom the Secretary-General today formally introduced to the Assembly. The developing countries have high expectations of her and of her office.

We support all initiatives that will enhance the role of the United Nations in promoting development, whether through a development account or by ensuring predictable and assured core funding for United Nations programmes and funds. As we have said throughout these discussions, this is the touchstone by which we will judge the success of the reform process.

Reforming structures may modernize them, but even a rejuvenated system will succeed only if the resources needed to fully implement its mandates are made available. We are therefore ready to engage, in a spirit of cooperation and partnership, in further discussions in the Second Committee on the report on core resources for development, and in the Fifth Committee on the Revolving Credit Fund, on the utilization of the Development Account and on the impact of

implementation of pilot projects on budgetary practices and procedures. But these discussions will not alter the reality that even this reformed United Nations will remain in financial crisis if assessed contributions are not paid in full, on time and without conditions. We have just been reminded that reform is a process, not an event. But unless arrears are paid promptly and future contributions not held back, reform will become — as sections of the media have noted — a process of non-events.

A brief word about the Development Account. We still have no assurance that mandated programmes of vital interest to developing countries can be fully executed within an arbitrary ceiling or that the Development Account can be maintained in the years to come. On the other hand, we welcome the objectives of the Development Account, including, *inter alia*, the promotion of South-South cooperation. We look forward to further discussions to ensure that the objectives for the utilization of this Account can be promoted without in any way affecting the conduct of other programmes or mandates of the United Nations, especially those which are of primary interest to developing countries.

On a possible new concept of trusteeship, we await the report of the high-level Task Force set up by the Secretary-General under the Chairmanship of the Executive Director of United Nations Environment Programme.

Any change in the Charter bodies of United Nations that has a profound bearing on the structure of this Organization must be discussed in an open-ended and transparent manner to allow all delegations and countries to effectively participate in and enrich those discussions. This caveat also applies to other long-term changes proposed in the reports of the Secretary-General. For example, the success of the Millennium Assembly can be ensured only through proper preparations, including through a preparatory committee or an open-ended working group, to decide through inter-governmental negotiations its agenda and outcome. Furthermore, the documentation for discussions will need to be prepared well in advance if the Assembly is to have more than a symbolic impact.

We have noted that the question of constituting a special commission at the ministerial level to consider changes in the constitutions and charters of the specialized agencies has been deferred to the Millennium Assembly. We have some doubts about the need for such a commission. We also believe that it is important to ensure that the Millennium Forum being proposed is truly representative in scope, with full and effective participation of non-governmental organizations from developing countries.

In conclusion, we want to believe that the changes that we have approved and will be considering in the future will lead to real gains in the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations, and that together they will strengthen the hand of the Secretary-General in promoting the objectives of the United Nations.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): Let me first of all express on behalf of my delegation, my appreciation to the Secretary-General for presenting the report before us in response to the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly last year. Japan is gratified by the momentum for reform that has been generated in the current session of the General Assembly, which has been dubbed the "reform General Assembly", and hopes that, with a firm political will and a forward-looking spirit, we will be able to achieve overall and balanced reform, encompassing the Security Council, finance and development.

The proposals put forward by the Secretary-General today are an important milestone towards part of such a comprehensive reform. Indeed, since his proposals are integral elements of Track 2, it is essential that we not lose sight of the whole picture and give careful consideration to each of them in that light. We should then move on as soon as possible to the implementation of the proposals on which Member States can agree.

As for the procedure we should follow, my delegation is of the view that, as a first step, all the proposals should be initially considered at the policy level in plenary. The exact format could be approached flexibly. However, to the extent necessary, as an extra step, we have no objection to submitting some of the proposals to the relevant committees, in order to get their technical findings. However, they should then be returned for consideration and decision by the plenary in a timely manner.

With regard to the timing of such a procedure, in principle those proposals should be acted upon by the General Assembly during the current session. There are some proposals that should be implemented as quickly as possible. For instance, I wish to refer to the question of the Development Account. In the 1998-99 budget, an initial amount has been budgeted and appropriated and it is necessary to make a concrete decision on the specific use of the fund. Moreover, if we are to reflect the Development Account in the next budgetary process,

which starts this August, it will also be necessary to reach agreement as early as possible on the mechanism for implementing the Development Account. Therefore, to the extent that some of them have to be discussed in a Main Committee — such as the Second or the Fifth Committee — these considerations should be settled in May so that the plenary can come back to resume its consideration on all those proposals and make a decision on their implementation in June.

I would now like to present the basic position of my delegation on the various proposals. First of all, my delegation attaches particular importance to the speedy implementation of the Development Account, as I said earlier. This Account was formally established by the General Assembly at the end of 1997, on the basis of a concept which Japan advocated: to reinvest savings for use in the field of development. It is necessary that we come to an early agreement, first, on the projects for which the funds will be used during the current biennium and, secondly, on the modalities for the Development Account in future bienniums. As regards this biennium, $13 million has been appropriated for this Account, but not a single dollar has yet been spent from it. In order to have the funds available for projects that will benefit the development of developing countries, it is necessary to reach agreement on the projects for which it is to be used. We therefore request a clarification as to when the current concrete proposal is to be presented by the Secretariat.

In our view, the basic purpose of the Development Account is to support activities to assist global and/or regional development efforts that would ordinarily be funded from the regular budget but that cannot be fully realized due to insufficient funds. We would like to suggest some examples that could be considered to be funded from the Development Account during the current biennium. First, in the present global economic climate — which is fundamentally different from what it was earlier this decade — it is important for the United Nations to devise a new development strategy, drawing upon the relevant experiences within and outside United Nations forums. I believe it would be useful for the Secretariat to tap the resources available in the Development Account and gather the views of a range of experts and relevant organizations to contribute to the efforts of Member States to explore better this issue.

Secondly, in promoting South-South cooperation there is a need to enhance information and communication regarding the availability of technologies so that interested parties can be better informed about where to find the technologies they need. The Secretariat, while avoiding duplication of work done elsewhere, could use the funds in the Development Account to conduct a study on the establishment of a data bank of technologies accessible to interested parties so as to match the demand and supply of South-South cooperation.

Thirdly, projects to assist in enhancing the capabilities of developing countries to conduct economic research and analyses should also receive high priority in the use of the Development Account.

I would now like to comment on the modalities for implementation in the future.

In implementing the proposals to be funded by the Development Account my delegation does not have a problem with the proposal of having the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs serve as Programme Manager. However, as for the procedure for approving projects once submitted, I wonder if it might be useful to request the Secretary-General to propose projects as a part of the proposed programme budget, as he stated, and to present them also to the Economic and Social Council for its consideration. Recommendations by the Economic and Social Council would be submitted to the General Assembly for final approval in the context of adopting the programme budget. This might be meaningful in terms of enhancing the role of the Economic and Social Council.

As regards the income side of the Development Account, it is Japan's position that a certain level of savings should be appropriated for the Development Account at the time of adopting the programme budget. We thus differ from the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in this regard. The Secretary-General's report is not conclusive as to the timing of specifying the savings and appropriating them for the Development Account in the budgetary process.

I would like to urge the General Assembly to reach agreement as quickly as possible on the mechanism and modalities for implementing this Account in order to prepare an outline for the next budget in August.

Next, Japan basically supports the proposal that the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, in the year 2000, be designated the Millennium Assembly and that a high-level segment be devoted to consideration of the United Nations in the twenty-first century. I would

emphasize, however, that in order to ensure that such an endeavour is truly meaningful, it will be necessary to prepare for it adequately and to decide well in advance on the designation of the Assembly. We hope the designation of the Millennium Assembly will invigorate the reform efforts that are under way and promote reform in the political, economic, social and administrative areas in a balanced manner, with the results reflected in the report for this session.

As for the proposal to reorganize the Trusteeship Council and have it take up global problems such as those relating to the environment and common areas — the seas, atmosphere and outer space — let me state that Japan sincerely appreciates the suggestion that the United Nations intensify its efforts regarding these matters. We note with interest a Secretary-General's establishment of a Task Force chaired by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme.

However, the vital and growing importance of the global environment should not be confused with the fact that the Trusteeship Council has fulfilled its historic mandate. We believe that the Trusteeship Council, once it has successfully achieved its objective, should be abolished and that the global environment and common areas should be addressed by the other appropriate United Nations bodies. The question of considering them in the context of a new concept of trusteeship should be taken up more appropriately and realistically in the relevant bodies.

Turning now to the Secretary-General's proposal for sunset provisions to provide specific time limits for mandates, let me say that Japan basically supports this concept as a contribution to defining clearly the objectives and goals of activities. The international community is changing, and international organizations must review their activities regularly in order to address and meet these new needs. The continuation of activities that have lost their relevance and urgency in the changing international situation tend to occupy precious time and resources of the United Nations, leaving little for the emerging and truly worthwhile ones. We would welcome the broad application of the sunset provision as one of the useful tools for United Nations programming. In the future, new mandates, when prepared by Member States and the Secretary-General, should be more clearly defined in terms of objectives and duration at the time of adopting a draft resolution in the General Assembly or other organs.

While my delegation understands the circumstances under which a revolving credit fund was proposed by the Secretary-General, we must not ignore the fact that some Member States have huge amounts of arrears. Such a fund is not necessary so long as Member States fulfil their Charter obligations to pay their assessments in full, on time and without conditions. Unless there is a marked improvement in reducing arrears, such a fund is simply a palliative and will be readily depleted. We therefore doubt the feasibility of obtaining voluntary contributions — convincing Member States to make contributions of such magnitude or coming up with alternative financing of such magnitude from other sources.

We also have serious problems with the proposed notification procedure after 90 days. Appropriate consideration should be given to the timing of a Member State's fiscal year. We appreciate the qualification given in the paper by the Secretariat entitled "The impact of the implementation of pilot projects on budgetary practices and procedures". While my delegation understands the need to rationalize and render more effective the work of the United Nations and respects the authority of the Secretary-General as the chief administrative officer, the delegation of authority in the financial and human resources fields should be studied carefully, on the basis of the relevant discussions of Member States concerning policy matters in this field.

As regards the proposal of the Secretary-General on core resources for development, Japan, as a strong supporter of United Nations operational activities, is seriously concerned about the trend toward declining core resources. In order to ensure the availability of necessary resources for operational activities of funds and programmes, it will be necessary to develop an overall funding strategy, including non-core resources, taking into account the specific nature of individual funds and programmes. We hope the discussions on funding strategies that are currently being undertaken in other forums will provide a good basis for a substantive decision by the General Assembly in a timely manner.

Let me conclude by assuring the Assembly that my delegation will continue to act constructively for the early resolution of this issue.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): Renewal of the United Nations is crucial if we are to effectively meet future challenges. Reform is necessary in order to strengthen the United Nations capacity to assist the developing countries, to deal with complex humanitarian crises and to mitigate and prevent conflicts.

Norway reiterates its full support for the reform package of the Secretary-General, including the important decisions adopted at the fifty-second session of the General Assembly. It is now up to the Member States to implement and follow up on this reform package. We share the ambition to make the United Nations more effective and thereby more relevant to its Member States, and we believe that the current reform initiatives are important steps in this direction. We hope that Member States will join forces in preparing the United Nations for the challenges of the next century.

Norway welcomes the follow-up papers to General Assembly resolution 52/12 B and would like to comment briefly on them.

Norway supports the outline of the Development Account, based on savings resulting from administrative reforms. The Development Account expresses the essence of the purpose behind United Nations reforms: freeing administrative resources that can be reallocated for development purposes. The resources saved must go to global, regional and national development efforts, particularly to help developing countries follow up the commitments ensuing from United Nations conferences, while avoiding duplication. Furthermore, we support the principles and the objectives of the fund, in particular the aim of enabling developing countries to take advantage of the globalization of the world economy.

Norway also welcomes the proposed Millennium Assembly, which will give Member States an opportunity to discuss and agree upon fundamental guidelines and policy recommendations for the next century. We support the proposed preparations leading up to this event. We are somewhat disappointed that the proposal to establish a special commission to evaluate the institutional framework of the United Nations has been put on ice. We believe that the fundamental questions put forward in the Secretary-General's reform programme should be discussed as an integral part of the preparations leading up to the Millennium Assembly and should not wait until afterwards.

Norway further welcomes the proposal to establish sunset provisions on new initiatives. Ensuring that new initiatives are adequately followed up within a set time-frame is in everyone's interest. We agree that it is also important to improve the review mechanisms for existing mandates.

Norway also supports the Secretary-General's initiative to delegate authority. This should lead to a more efficient, effective and transparent Organization. We therefore welcome the clarification provided by the Secretary-General in his paper entitled "The impact of the implementation of pilot projects on budgetary practices and procedures" [A/52/852].

Norway is deeply concerned about the financial situation of the United Nations, in particular the decline in resources for development activities. We clearly need a mode of financing that will ensure a predictable and continuous supply of resources. It is disturbing that only a handful of countries are providing the bulk of resources for United Nations development activities. Private donors can never assume the responsibility of Governments. In order to ensure fair burden-sharing, we need to consider the introduction of negotiated pledges and assessed contributions as a supplement to voluntary contributions. The Nordic countries have put forward a proposal based on these principles. In this context, we appreciate the Secretary-General's proposal to introduce negotiated contributions for financing United Nations development activities. The establishment of an Office of Development Financing, with the aim of exploring new and innovative funding mechanisms, also has our full support.

The work of the United Nations is hampered by its precarious financial situation. Norway is willing to consider mechanisms aimed at improving the financial basis of the United Nations. We must, however, see to it that improvements in United Nations liquidity do not serve as a pretext for Member States to shirk their Charter obligations. It is essential that all countries pay their dues in full, on time and unconditionally. The proposed Revolving Credit Fund should be considered in this context.

There is a clear need for a high-level review of global environmental problems. We therefore look forward to the proposals of the United Nations Environment Programme Task Force on environmental and human settlement issues.

The General Assembly is the appropriate forum for discussing the papers before us today. We should make swift and concrete decisions on most issues. In a few instances, further discussions and clarifications may be required — for example, with regard to the financing of development activities and the reconstitution of the Trusteeship Council. But here, too, we should aim at concrete results before too long.

United Nations reform, like all reform processes, requires a clear sense of purpose and clear priorities. If we succeed in our reform efforts, the United Nations may assume the role and prominence foreseen by its founding fathers. If we do not succeed, we run the risk that the United Nations system will become marginalized, to the detriment of us all.

Finally, I would like to welcome Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette upon her formal assumption of office. We wish her success in her new functions.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): I should like from the outset to express our appreciation to you, Mr. President, for your initiative in convening the Assembly today in order to continue our consideration of a question that has become so vital for us: the reform of the United Nations — an issue that, under your presidency, has experienced undeniable progress, largely due to your efforts.

I should also like to express our gratitude to the Secretary-General for the excellent introduction that he has just provided to the additional reports requested by Member States in the framework of the resolutions on reform and on the programme budget for 1998-1999. Thus, to his credit, he has solemnly complied with our request to introduce the reports as scheduled.

In addition, I should like to extend a well-deserved tribute to Mrs. Louise Fréchette, the first high-ranking official to occupy this eminent new post, that has come out of the reforms. We are convinced that she is better able than anyone else to imbue this important post with the spirit of public service, with enthusiasm and with knowledge of the sensibilities of States that our Organization so greatly needs today. I should like to take this opportunity to welcome her among us and to assure her of our full support in the difficult task that lies ahead for her.

My delegation would like to associate itself fully with the statement made by the representative of Colombia on behalf of the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China.

Having taken note of the various reports officially submitted today, which surely constitute a qualitatively new stage in the continuing and deepening reform process that began last year, Algeria would like from the outset to reaffirm here that it attaches great importance to the work of restructuring and revitalizing the United Nations system and to reiterate our desire to commit ourselves fully to this beneficial and necessary endeavour.

It is therefore in a serious, responsible and constructive spirit that we will consider these reports and in due course express our views and comments.

At this point in the debate, however, my delegation would like to comment on certain aspects that are more closely related to procedure than to substance. In this regard, we wish to note the deep interest it attaches to these reports' being sent to the competent organs specifically under agenda item 157, because we are convinced that, before any decision whatsoever is taken on the proposals before us, it is important that they be considered and clearly identified with reform in their original framework.

This allocation to the Commissions will obviously need to be done in such a way as to enable a coherent, complete and integrated study of the various proposals. Thus, we feel that the report on core resources for development should be sent to the Second Committee, which we believe to be the appropriate body to consider the Secretary-General's proposals and the possibility of establishing a new system for core resources.

Similarly, the Fifth Committee would seem to be the proper body to study the report on the utilization of the Development Account, since the Account now has legal status and has even benefited from funding by virtue of paragraph 106 of part III of resolution 52/220, following the abolition of the High-level Advisory Board on Sustainable Development. The Fifth Committee, on that occasion, would undertake to determine the viability of the Account and the reliability of the potential sources of savings, as well as the long-term dependability of the resources to be released and hence the potential longevity of the Development Account. The Fifth Committee would do all this while ensuring that the overall level of future budgets of the Organization are in no way affected.

We believe that the reports contained in documents A/52/822 and A/52/852 — concerning, respectively, the revolving credit fund and the impact of the implementation of pilot projects on budgetary practices and procedures — should, quite naturally, be sent to the Fifth Committee. Here again, the Committee would examine the Secretary-General's detailed proposals, especially as regards the feasibility and modalities of establishing a revolving credit fund. This, of course, should be done only within strict respect for the principle

of the United Nations Charter in accordance with which the expenses of the Organization are assumed by the Members on the basis of the apportionment decided by the General Assembly — in other words, on the basis of assessments — with the requirement that Member States make their contributions fully, on time and without condition.

As for the reports on longer-term changes that fall within the ongoing United Nations reform process, the Algerian delegation, in this connection, supports the proposal made by the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China. In fact, we feel that the establishment of a working group of the General Assembly, open to all Member States, would be the appropriate way to make an in-depth and transparent study of the contents of these proposals, aimed at making fundamental changes for the future of our Organization.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes once again to reaffirm here its complete dedication to the process of reforming the United Nations in order to enable it to face the challenges of the next millennium while retaining its original personality and assuming its role in accordance with the aspirations of the States by whose will it exists and without whose full and resolute participation no reform worthy of the name can take lasting shape.

Mr. Babar (Pakistan): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your re-election to the Ukrainian Parliament and to say how pleased we are to see you in our midst, guiding our work. We would also like to avail ourselves of this opportunity to extend our felicitations to the new Deputy Secretary-General for assuming her new responsibilities. We are thankful to the Secretary-General for his statement and for submitting his reports in a timely manner in pursuance of resolution 52/12 B.

My delegation associates itself fully with the statement made earlier by the Chairman of the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China. We support the proposal that reports A/52/822 on the revolving credit fund, A/52/847 on the core resources for development and A/52/848 on the utilization of the Development Account be referred to the relevant Committees of the General Assembly for consideration.

We also note from report A/52/849 that the Secretary-General will be submitting at a later date his proposals regarding a new concept of trusteeship, by taking into account the report to be submitted to him by the Task Force on environmental and human settlement areas established under the chairmanship of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

My delegation concurs with the proposal that an open-ended working group of the General Assembly be set up to consider the important political issues contained in document A/52/850, entitled "A Millennium Assembly, the United Nations system (Special Commission) and a Millennium Forum", and in document A/52/851, entitled "Time limits of new initiatives ('sunset' provisions)".

The following are our initial comments on the Secretary-General's proposals contained in his seven reports.

First, the financial crisis of the Organization has led to serious difficulties for both the Organization and the Member States. In our view, the establishment of a revolving credit fund would not rid the Organization of its financial crisis. While it may provide some relief, the solution to the problem lies in the payment of dues by all Member States, especially those that are major contributors and have the capacity to pay their dues. Despite our reservations on this proposal, we are ready to support the consideration of this issue in the Fifth Committee.

Secondly, we are not sure that the report A/52/847 on the core resources for development offers any solution for resolving, in the short term, the problem of diminishing core resources for development. We appreciate nonetheless that the Secretary-General has reiterated the need to address this issue. In our view, it is essential that adequate resources be available on a predictable, continuous and assured basis for this purpose. For development activities, we support the proposal that immediate and effective steps be taken to achieve greater predictability through multi-year voluntary pledges and the idea that safeguards are needed against currency volatility. The developed countries should also meet the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of their gross national product for official development assistance as soon as possible.

Thirdly, as regards utilization of the Development Account, we find it difficult to understand how the Account would be maintained in the light of the perpetual financial crisis of the Organization. We would like to reiterate our view that the United Nations balance sheet does not support the Secretary-General's optimism in this regard and also that the idea of a development dividend

is certainly no solution for the development needs of the developing countries.

The Secretary-General himself underlined in document A/51/950 that the continuing cash-flow crisis had made it difficult to stem the mounting tide of debts owed to Member States contributing troops to peacekeeping operations. We have been informed time and again that since 1995 the Organization has been borrowing extensively from the peacekeeping budget. The Organization is thus faced with an extraordinary situation in which money due to developing countries is being used to offset the crisis created by the non-payment of assessed contributions by major contributors. We therefore require far-reaching measures to address the immediate financial crisis of the United Nations and the development needs of the developing countries.

Fourthly, as regards document A/52/851, concerning time limits of new initiatives, or sunset provisions, it is recalled that in paragraph 44 of document A/51/950, as in document A/52/851, the Secretary-General refers to sunset provisions, suggesting that each initiative that involves a new organizational structure and/or a major commitment of funds could be subjected to specific time limits. We also recall in this regard the statement made by the Secretary-General in the General Assembly on 12 November 1997, in which he stated that sunset provisions would be introduced only for new mandates. In this regard, we would like to reiterate our position that Pakistan cannot accept sunset provisions for missions which are already established, such as the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization and the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan, as the issues they were called upon to address have not been resolved.

Finally, we appreciate the detailed note by the Secretary-General, contained in document A/52/850, on a Millennium Assembly, the United Nations system (Special Commission) and a Millennium Forum. We support the proposal that the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly should be designated as the Millennium Assembly. Its high-level segment, known as Millennium Summit, could be devoted to the theme "The United Nations in the twenty-first century". We shall be looking forward to the Secretary-General's report on this subject. We also welcome the proposal that a Millennium Forum should precede the Millennium Assembly. We note from the Secretary-General's note that consultations among non-governmental organizations towards that end have already begun.

Mr. Tchoulkov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): First, I wish on behalf of my delegation to welcome Ms. Fréchette and to wish her every success in the very important post of Deputy Secretary-General.

I should like to thank the Secretary-General for preparing and introducing new documents on a number of aspects related to reform, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 52/12 B. These clarify the earlier more general approach to efforts to enhance the effectiveness and viability of the Organization. In our view, one way of ensuring progress in reform is to gain active and constructive support for proposed measures and initiatives by all Member States. It is therefore of the utmost importance that these measures should be rational and balanced, and that to the greatest extent possible they should reflect our common interests. We understand that this task is by no means easy, and we are willing to do our utmost to facilitate a solution.

We believe that, in order to move forward, it is essential first to give thorough consideration to the documents before us. Given the specific and sometimes highly specialized nature of the issues they address, it may be necessary to call upon the expertise of the relevant committees of the General Assembly. This should make it possible to achieve broad agreement on further reform steps. We trust that delegations will be able to get answers to the questions that concern them, and that they will have an opportunity to study thoroughly the ideas placed before them and adjust them when necessary.

At this stage, my delegation will not give a detailed assessment of the documents before us, but will make only a few general comments.

On the whole, our response to the Secretary-General's proposals on the Development Account is positive, but we would like more detailed information on a number of points, such as where productivity gains will be sought on an ongoing basis, how the implementation machinery will function, and how programmes will be monitored and assessed.

We also support the proposals on time limits of new initiatives — sunset provisions. We believe it would be useful to seek the views of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and other relevant bodies on possible ways to extend this practice to existing mandates.

We continue to have grave doubts about the idea and mechanism of establishing a revolving credit fund. This would basically amount to a system of financial penalties and incentives, and it is well known that in the United Nations this concept has not been thoroughly thought through or agreed upon. Incidentally, there is no mention of the need to take into account the reasons for a failure to pay. We have a number of questions on the specifics of implementing this proposal. These include questions on how the fund would actually function, on the return of surpluses and on the conditions under which the fund would be terminated. Many other questions also remain.

As to a new concept of trusteeship, we believe that the work of the Task Force to which the Secretary-General refers could shed light on several aspects of this new concept, on which we continue to have a number of questions.

Turning to the Secretary-General's proposals for a Millennium Assembly, we trust that appropriate stress will be placed on the financial viability of the plans, with a view to minimizing expenditures.

We intend to give thorough study to the Secretary-General's new proposals on changes to the system of contributions to core resources for the operational activities of United Nations programmes and funds. Russia believes it important to stabilize the funding for the operational activities of the United Nations, in the interest of recipient countries. At the same time, the question of ensuring adequate and predictable financing must be resolved on the basis of preserving the voluntary nature of the contributions system. Resources might be supplemented by further expanding the practice of burden-sharing and by links with the financing of the private sector and non-governmental organizations. We consider that important work is under way in the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme on preparing a strategy for stable financing.

Here I would refer also to the work of the various open-ended working groups in which Member States participate; we should take account of their work in determining our position on the note of the Secretary-General. Once our Governments have assessed the outcome of the work of the working groups, and once we have studied the proposals set out in the note, it would be worthwhile in our view to return in the context of the Second Committee to the question of financing operational activities.

We welcome the useful information provided by the Secretary-General in the document on the impact of the implementation of pilot projects and budgetary practices and procedures, and we trust that this will be duly be taken account of subsequently.

In conclusion, I would like to say just a couple of words on procedure. We support the emerging view on referring to the Second and Fifth Committees the reports on the revolving credit fund, the impact of the implementation of pilot projects and budgetary practices and procedures and the report on the Development Account. We believe that we could consider the other reports within the context of the informal consultations of the General Assembly.

Mr. Fowler (Canada): The Canadian delegation is grateful to the Secretary-General and his team for their recent reports on the important process of the reform of the United Nations. We welcome the designation of Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette as the senior Secretariat official responsible for directing the implementation and the follow-up of the reform process. We look forward to working with her in this important endeavour, which remains essential to the preservation of the credibility and the authority of the United Nations. We look forward to presenting our views on the substantive matters still before us once we have decided how we will continue to conduct this process of United Nations reform.

On the matter of next steps and the appropriate venue for further discussion, the Canadian delegation agrees with the European Union and others that the General Assembly, meeting in plenary session, is indeed the appropriate forum for discussion and action on the weighty reform issues before us. We believe that, at least at this initial stage, it would not be useful to fragment and divide the various reforms proposals and send elements piecemeal to a variety of subsidiary bodies. We believe that the coordination and policy-guidance responsibilities of the General Assembly remain critical to the achievement of comprehensive success across the reform agenda.

Mr. Cho (Republic of Korea): My delegation would first of all like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for the reports he presented in response to General Assembly resolution 52/12 B. My delegation has carefully studied these reports, and I should like to make some preliminary comments.

My delegation supports the proposal of the Secretary-General, in document A/52/850, to convene the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly as a Millennium Assembly with a summit segment. We welcome the Secretary-General's intention to prepare a report on the theme of the Millennium Assembly, and for our part we are prepared to contribute to the preparation process by submitting our proposals on two or three possible themes for the Millennium Assembly at a later stage.

We concur with the idea of establishing a special commission at the ministerial level to examine relations among the various component parts of the United Nations system and their ability to adjust to the challenges of the new millennium. In this context, we hope that the Millennium Assembly will endeavour to establish the special commission.

We support the proposal of the Secretary-General that non-governmental organizations and other civil society actors organize a Millennium Forum in connection with the Millennium Assembly. However, given the diverse characters, size and objectives of non-governmental organizations, we are of the view that the idea of the Millennium Forum should be further elaborated. In particular, careful examination should be given to how the outcome of the Forum could be reflected in the future activities of the United Nations, with a view to obtaining substantial results from the Forum.

With regard to the revolving credit fund, we appreciate the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/52/822 for elaborating some of the practical aspects of its implementation. However, my delegation is still not fully convinced of the practicability of establishing $1 billion fund through voluntary contributions. As we pointed out during the informal consultations, capitalization at a level of up to $1 billion through voluntary contributions would place an additional financial burden on Member States which faithfully abide by their treaty obligations.

My delegation fully supports the proposal of the Secretary-General to establish a Development Account generated by savings in administrative costs. We take note of the well-defined principles governing utilization and performance criteria, in A/52/848, and expect them to be implemented successfully.

The Republic of Korea attaches great importance to international development cooperation to assist developing countries with a view to promoting higher standards of living, full employment and conditions of economic and social progress and development. The Secretary-General's note on core resources for development, in A/52/847, identifies problems with current funding arrangements for core resources and suggests several means to ameliorate them.

With regard to the issue of multi-year pledges, it is our view that they are effective in enhancing greater funding predictability. However, because domestic budgetary systems and procedures differ from country to country, the idea of implementing pledges in only multi-year tranches may not be totally realistic. In our view, the most effective solution might be to find an appropriate mix between multi-year pledges and the current one-year pledge which may be more suitable to the diverse circumstances of Member States.

Concerning sunset provisions, Korea believes that their introduction will encourage the Organization to develop and implement mandated programmes and activities in a more effective and efficient manner. We therefore support the recommendation contained in the Secretary-General's note in document A/52/851.

As to document A/52/852, on the impact of the implementation of pilot projects on budgetary practices and procedures, my delegation concurs with the conclusion that it is within the purview of the Secretary-General to delegate his authorities and responsibilities to programme and line managers. We welcome the intention of the Secretary-General to pursue the delegation of authority as an instrument for management improvement.

However, my delegation wishes to emphasize that the delegation of authority should be synchronized with enhanced accountability of line managers. Unless this is done, the possibility may arise wherein line managers execute their delegated authority in an arbitrary manner. Therefore, my delegation urges the Secretary-General to undertake a performance appraisal system that effectively monitors and enhances the accountability of line managers. My delegation looks forward to the report on the implementation of the pilot projects at the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Concerning the new concept of trusteeship, my delegation is of the view that issues related to the integrity of the global environment and such common areas as the oceans, atmosphere and outer space maintain paramount significance for the future of all mankind. However, the reconstitution of the Trusteeship Council towards that end should be examined with utmost

prudence. Therefore, my delegation would like to submit its comments upon examination of the Task Force's forthcoming proposals on environment and human settlements.

Finally, regarding the matter of how we proceed to discuss the reports introduced by the Secretary-General, my delegation favours the proposal that the note on the "Core resources for development" be referred to the Second Committee and the documents on the "Revolving Credit Fund", the "Utilization of the Development Account" and "The impact of the implementation of pilot projects on budgetary practices and procedures" be referred to the Fifth Committee.

As for other remaining issues — the Millennium Assembly, trusteeship and sunset provisions — my delegation favours the idea of establishing an open-ended working group of the General Assembly to address these issues in depth.

To conclude, the Korean delegation wishes to reiterate its full support for the reform process initiated by the Secretary-General. Like other delegations, my delegation would also like to welcome Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette on her assumption of an important office of this Organization.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item, for this meeting at least.

Various views were expressed by Member States with regard to the organization of our work — how to proceed with the reports and notes presented by the Secretary-General.

Therefore, I should like to propose that we continue in open-ended informal consultations of the plenary the discussion of the organization of our work.

In the absence of any objection, may I take it that the General Assembly agrees to this proposal?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 8 *(continued)*

Adoption of the agenda of the fifty-second regular session of the General Assembly and organization of work: request for the inclusion of an additional item

Note by the Secretary-General (A/52/235)

The President: In his note contained in document A/52/235, the Secretary-General requests, pursuant to rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion in the agenda of the fifty-second session of an additional item entitled "Financing of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic".

Owing to the nature of the item, the Secretary-General further requests that it be allocated to the Fifth Committee.

Unless there is any objection, may I take it that the General Assembly agrees that the provision of rule 40 of the rules of procedure which would require a meeting of the General Committee on the question of the inclusion of this item in the agenda could be waived?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that the General Assembly, on the proposal of the Secretary-General, wishes to include an additional item in the agenda of the current session entitled "Financing of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic"?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to allocate the additional item to the Fifth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: The Chairman of the Fifth Committee will be duly informed of the decision we have just taken.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.